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ABSTRACT

The creation and functioning of the Special Needs Support Services Teacher/Coordinator at Ocean County Vocational School (Toms River, New Jersey) provided the careful planning, administration, and organization required by special needs students, particularly those students mainstreamed into vocational classrooms and those students recommended for mainstreaming. Written reports were reviewed, teachers and students were interviewed, and need for support services for classified students was identified. Pertinent information about individual student needs was received from and communicated to vocational instructors, sending district personnel, and parents. The addition of the Special Needs Support Services Teacher/Coordinator enhanced the possibilities for success of special needs students in vocational education. Increased aspirations and expanded opportunities for handicapped students resulted from greater probabilities for success in school, created by the existence of necessary support services. An opportunity to succeed with needed support may help the special needs student develop an understanding of the role of responsible worker and consumer. The Support Services Teacher/Coordinator has provided the organization and continuity to create the least restrictive environment in the school. (KC)

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FINAL REPORT

OF

VOCATIONAL/SPECIAL NEEDS SUPPORT SERVICES PILOT PROJECT

1981

Ocean County Vocational Technical School
Old Freehold and Bey Lea Roads
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This project reported herein was conducted pursuant to a contract from the New Jersey Department of Education, Division of Vocational Education and Career Preparation. It was funded under Section 132 of Public Law 94-482.

Project Duration:

January 5, 1981
Beginning Date

June 30, 1981
Ending Date

The Contractors undertaking this project were encouraged to express fully their judgments in professional and technical matters. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official funding agency positions or policies.

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PROJECT TITLE: VOCATIONAL/SPECIAL NEEDS SUPPORT SERVICES

LEGAL NAME OF APPLICANT DISTRICT, INSTITUTION OR AGENCY: Ocean County Vocational Technical School

ADDRESS: Old Freehold and Bey Lea Roads

Toms River, New Jersey 08753

PROJECT DIRECTOR: Mr. Joseph L. Scelfo

TELEPHONE NUMBER: (201) 349-8425
(Area Code)

ABSTRACT

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

(Use this sheet and no more than one other to type in single-spaced form a statement of project objectives, procedures that were followed, state and local priorities emphasized and the expected contribution of the project to vocational education.)

The creation and functioning of the Special Needs Support Services Teacher/Coordinator at Ocean County Vocational School provided the careful planning, administration and organization required by Special Needs students, particularly those students mainstreamed into vocational classrooms and those students recommended for mainstreaming. Written reports were reviewed, teachers and students were interviewed and need for support services for classified students was identified. Pertinent information about individual student needs was received from and communicated to vocational instructors, sending district personnel and parents. After problems were identified, alternative solutions were investigated and applied to support the learning success of students. Instructional supports to vocational instructors, sending district Special Needs personnel or directly to Special Needs students were arranged and provided as needed. Active communication with sending districts and vocational instructors was maintained.

The addition of the Special Needs Support Services Teacher/Coordinator enhanced the possibilities for success of Special Needs students in vocational education. Increased aspirations and expanded opportunities for handicapped students resulted from greater probabilities for success in school, created by the existence of necessary support services. Careful coordination of the manner in which each Special Needs student progresses through the continuum of services offered at the vocational school supports the goal of acquisition of basic occupational entry level skills and the opportunity to develop greater self-awareness and safety awareness. An opportunity to succeed with needed support may help the Special Needs

student develop an understanding of the role of responsible worker and consumer in the marketplace.

The Ocean County Vocational Technical School's Special Needs programs have been providing a logical and meaningful sequence of educational services to Special Needs students in Ocean County. The Support Services Teacher/Coordinator, the "connective tissue" between the programs, provided the organization and continuity to create the least restrictive environment at school. Continuity and organization will be essential during the 1980's , when the Ocean County Vocational Technical School district will nearly double in size.

INTRODUCTION

1. Problem - A shared time arrangement and the lack of an in-house Child Study Team within the Ocean County Vocational Technical Schools system, had in the past made it difficult to provide support services to Special Needs students within the Special Needs continuum. Of the 750 students involved in these Special Needs programs, those students requiring remediation in academic skills related to the vocational classes, especially those mainstreamed into regular classes, would require some type of support in order to ensure their success in the program. It had been necessary to request such services from the sending district or from the vocational instructors during class time. However, without one person to coordinate the efforts of those involved with these students, supportive instruction was carried out irregularly or was non-existent. Problems encountered by classified students were often discovered too late and were therefore more difficult to resolve. The need for a person with expertise in Special Education to coordinate services to classified students in the vocational school became evident.

2. Objectives - To meet the above need, the following objectives were developed:

   1. To create a Special Needs Support Services Teacher/Coordinator.

   2. To accumulate, review and extract information from written reports and teacher/student interviews about specific needs, particularly for mainstreamed students.

   3. To identify and bring into play alternative resources, techniques and actions to enhance learning of mainstreamed students in the vocational classes.

   4. To accurately communicate student activity and progress to parents and sending-district personnel.

3. Background Information/Related Research

The existing Special Needs Program at the Ocean County Vocational School is innovative and exemplary. The program serves approximately 750 classified and disadvantaged students in a variety of vocational disciplines. Prior to January of 1981, Special Needs Programs included pre-vocational evaluation, pre-vocational employment orientation, C.I.E. III, mainstreaming, and adult special needs. The Special Needs Program has been in existence for the past 11 years and has been carefully monitored. The results of this monitoring have indicated that the addition of a Special Needs Support Service Teacher/Coordinator would enhance the quality of the program being offered. As a result, in January of 1981 a Special Needs Support Services Coordinator was hired to implement a pilot program for providing support to first-year mainstreamed students in vocational classes.

The following research substantiates this approach of providing supportive services for vocational Special Needs students in a shared time setting. This support has special meaning to those students mainstreamed into regular vocational programs.

a. Mainstreaming: Mainstreaming is not permitting students with special needs to remain in regular classes without the support services they need. (Schwartz, 1978). Although many classified students in the Vocational School receive support services at their home schools, prior to the creation of the Support Services Teacher/Coordinator, they did not receive support directly related to their vocational classes.

b. Coordination Between Special Education and Vocational Education: There is an identified and overriding need for program coordination between special educators and vocational educators at the local level. (Hughes, 1978) Cooperation between the special education and vocational education educators

in planning and delivery of services is mandatory. Without this cooperation in planning and delivery of services, the success of the mainstreamed student might well be in jeopardy. (Rumble, 1978) The Special Needs Support Services Teacher/Coordinator would provide this coordination between special educators and vocational educators.

c. Current Mainstreaming Models: There are several models for mainstreaming the handicapped student. Current thinking seems to support the idea that Special Needs students can best be served in a regular vocational program if the student continues to receive special education support services while in a regular vocational program. (Rumble, 1978) The Support Services Teacher/Coordinator would improve on the regular placement with support method through services provided at the vocational school coordinated with services provided by sending schools.

d. Barriers to Mainstreaming: In implementing any new program, it is likely that barriers will be encountered. These barriers prove more formidable when we consider the mainstreaming of special needs students into regular vocational programs. There are four major obstacles in implementing a mainstreaming program. (Rue, 1974) They are:

1. Regular teacher attitudes to the handicapped.
2. Attitudes and willingness of general administrators.
3. Lack of fiscal resources.
4. Insufficient specialist staff.

The Support Services Teacher/Coordinator's main function is to overcome these obstacles.

e. Aspects of a successful Mainstreaming Program: There are characteristics in common to all successful mainstreaming programs. The most common characteristics of successful mainstreaming is a combination of:

1. Greater teacher cooperation
2. Instructional aides and tutoring
3. In-service programs

4. Individualized instruction
5. Modified curriculum
6. Flexible and competency based grading
7. Careful coordination of Special Needs students
8. Coordination of educational leadership
9. Modified equipment and/or facilities (when necessary)
(Feicher & O'Brien, 1979)

The Support Services Teacher/Coordinator incorporated all of these characteristics in the pilot program.

PROCEDURES

The following procedures were implemented in order to accomplish the previously stated objectives:

1. A former Resource Room instructor with a strong background in Special Education and experience in consulting with regular class instructors was hired as a Teacher/Coordinator to implement a pilot program for support of mainstreamed students in their vocational classes.

2. The Teacher/Coordinator reviewed written reports and interviewed vocational instructors and classified students to identify first-year mainstreamed students in need of remedial help in their vocational classes. Informal tests were administered in some instances where additional information was needed. On the basis of this information, ten students were selected to receive services.

3. Support services were chosen by the Teacher/Coordinator from a series of alternatives, so that the type of service suited the needs of the specific student and situation:

Type of Service	Student/Situation
a. Remedial academic instruction provided during vocational class time by the Teacher/Coordinator	For a student who would benefit most from intensive one-to-one instruction, when spending time out of vocational class would not be detrimental to his/her progress.

b. Remedial academic instruction provided during a special class by the Special Education instructor at the sending school	For a student who would benefit from remedial instruction, when spending time away from the vocational class would be detrimental to student progress.
c. Remedial academic instruction provided by the Teacher/Coordinator at the vocational school, as well as by the Special Education instructor at the sending school.	For a student who would benefit from intensive one-to-one instruction with much reinforcement, when a coordinated program is essential to student progress.
d. Consultation by Teacher/Coordinator with regular vocational instructors to provide methods and materials and to monitor student progress.	For a student who is mainstreamed on a trial basis or who needs a minimal amount of support.

4. Sending district personnel and parents of students selected for the program were notified. Contact with sending district personnel was maintained throughout the program in order to coordinate services to the mainstreamed students. Visits were made to the home school for meetings with Special Education personnel as needed.

5. Student progress was carefully monitored through frequent contact with the students' regular vocational instructors and sending district Special Education personnel. Written records of student progress included monthly progress reports, daily instruction records, individual vocational education plans and teacher consultation reports.

FINDINGS

Several criteria were used to judge the effects of support services on the learning success of the mainstreamed classified students. The major goal was to improve the students' academic skills related to the vocational class so as to enhance learning. Once it was determined which academic skills were deficient for each student, instructional objectives were developed to remediate these deficiencies. Attainment of the instructional objectives by each student is an indication of improvement in academic skills and enhancement of learning.

Results of informal testing and assessments of student performance by vocational and special education instructors show that 9 out of 10 students (90%) participating in the project attained all of the objectives initially set for them. Four out of the 10 students (40%) exceeded the goals originally prescribed and met additional objectives. (See Table 1)

Another indicator of the program's effectiveness is the extent to which students' performance in the vocational classes improved. Improvement was assessed by collecting and analyzing data provided by vocational instructors on monthly progress reports and during consultations with the project coordinator. Analysis of this data showed that during participation in the project, the number of student problems noted on the progress reports decreased in 100% of the cases. (See Table 2) The number of positive comments about student performance noted on the progress reports increased in 70% of the cases. (see Table 3) A summary and analysis of information provided by vocational instructors from progress reports and consultations indicates that 7 out of 10 students (70%) showed overall improvement in either shop or classroom performance. The other 30% maintained satisfactory performance. Five out of 10 students (50%) improved in both shop and classroom performance.

The duration of the project was short (6 months), therefore, improvement in related academics may not be reflected consistently by any dramatic improvement in vocational class grades. Furthermore, grades are affected by many variables which were not controlled during the project. Of the 10 students, 100% maintained satisfactory grades throughout the project.

All 10 students (100%) were recommended by their instructors to return to their vocational program for a second year. Only those students who have demonstrated ability to perform successfully in the program are asked to return.

The results of a questionnaire distributed to the vocational instructors involved in the support services project showed that all of the instructors believed the program benefited the students and wanted the program to continue. However, one instructor noted the need for some modification regarding removing students from vocational class to receive remediation. Modification of this aspect of the project has been incorporated in next year's program. (See 1981-82 Proposal). An interesting informal finding was the enthusiasm and cooperation exhibited by the sending district personnel (Child Study Teams, Guidance Counselors, Special Education Instructors) who were involved with students receiving support services. They expressed a desire to know more about the vocational needs of their students and cooperated in meeting those needs. (Half of the students received all or part of the necessary remediation from sending district resource personnel.) All of them saw the support services program as necessary and beneficial to special needs students and hoped that the program would continue.

INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

Consultations with vocational instructors throughout the duration of the project clearly indicated that academic skills play a significant role in vocational education. The vocational instructors stressed that lack of mastery of basic academic skills, especially mathematics and reading, hindered the progress of some students in their classes. For classified students especially, deficiencies in academic skills made adjustment to a regular program more difficult. The findings reported in this project indicate that mainstreamed students' skills in academics related to vocational classes can be improved, and that improvement of these skills can lead to more successful performance in a vocational program. (90% of the students achieved the instructional objectives developed for them, 70% showed overall improvement in shop or class performance.)

In cases where there was little or no improvement in performance, student attitude played a significant role. Lack of interest in the vocational program and fear of failure in academic performance were major causes of minimal effort and performance by a mainstreamed student. In cases where the major problem was poor student attitude caused by lack of interest in the vocational program, instruction in academics had no effect on vocational class performance, although academic skills improved. The students did not use the skills they had acquired. Participation in the support services project was helpful in this situation because the project coordinator, who was aware of the problem, was able to recommend a change to a more suitable program. Changing a student's negative attitude toward a class due to fear of failure in academic situations requires a great deal of time and sensitive instruction in deficient areas. Although the support services program was able to provide the instruction, an adequate amount of time was lacking. The effect of the program in this respect cannot be assessed at this time.

Both vocational instructors and sending district personnel regarded the support services project as beneficial and wanted it to continue. These positive reactions to the project can most likely be attributed to two things. First, both could see actual improvement in the students' performance as a result of support services. Furthermore, each received assistance in areas with which they felt less comfortable--the vocational needs of special students for the sending district personnel, and the academic needs of these students for the vocational instructors. The support services project was able to provide each with a better understanding of the other's needs and problems in relation to special students.

TABLE 1: Number of Instructional Objectives set and number reached by mainstreamed students in project:

Student	# Objectives Set (Initial)	# Objectives Reached	# Additional Objectives Reached *
1	5	5	2
2	5	5	1
3	1	1	
4	4	4	
5	4	4	
6	2	1	
7	1	1	1
8	2	2	1
9	1	1	
10	1	1	

* Note: These represent objectives students were able to achieve in addition to those initially developed for them.

TABLE 2: Comparison of number of problems demonstrated by mainstreamed students and noted by vocational instructors before and after participation in project.

	# OF PROBLEMS NOTED		
Student	Before Project	After 2 Months in Project	After 5 Months in Project
1	2	1	0
2	2	0	0
3	2	0	0
4	1	0	0
5	4	3	0
6	4	2	1
7	2	0	0
8	1	0	0
* 9	-	-	
*10	-	-	

* Note: These students were trial-mainstreamed and were included in the project in order to maintain satisfactory performance.

TABLE 3: Number of positive comments by vocational instructors re mainstreamed students before and after participation in project.

	# POSITIVE COMMENTS		
Student	Before Project	After 2 months in project	After 5 months in project
1	0	1	1
2	0	0	
3	0	0	1
4	0	1	1
5	0	0	1
6	0	0	
7	0	0	1
8	0	0	1
9	0	1	1
10	0	1	1

DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES PLANNED and/or IMPLEMENTED

Throughout the duration of the project, vocational instructors and sending district personnel were kept informed of objectives formulated for students and of progress toward those objectives. Upon completion of the project, final reports were forwarded to instructors and sending district personnel. Copies of the Final Report were forwarded to the Superintendent of the Ocean County Vocational Schools and the N.J. State Department of Education, Division of Vocational Education.

STRATEGIES OR ACTIVITIES EMPLOYED TO ELIMINATE SEX BIAS AND SEX ROLE STEROTYPING

The vocational evaluation, the existing first step of the Ocean County Vocational Technical School Special Needs continuum, continued to be used as a means to identify functional strengths and weaknesses based on performance, not sex. Availability of additional support services enhanced adjustment possibilities for students mainstreamed into non-traditional areas.

CONCLUSIONS

Provision of support services to mainstreamed classified students contributed to improved performance in vocational class, as well as to an increased awareness of special students' needs by vocational instructors and sending district personnel. Improvement in related academic skills is an important factor in increased vocational class performance. Student attitude also plays a significant role. Although student attitude is more difficult to change, both of these factors can be influenced through provision of sensitively coordinated support services. Classified students mainstreamed into regular vocational classes can be successful with the proper support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Support Services pilot project successfully met the needs of the ten first-year mainstreamed students in Ocean County Vocational Technical School. In order to meet the needs of more students and their vocational instructors, the project should be expanded in both duration and size. The expanded program would include more contact with sending district special education personnel, who would become more involved in providing necessary remedial instruction in related academics. This would allow the students to remain in the vocational classes as much as possible yet still receive academic instruction when necessary. The Support Services Team would then act as a liaison, coordinating vocational and special education of special needs students in the Ocean County communities.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Feicher, S. and O'Brien, T., Mainstreaming Special Needs Students into Regular Vocational Classrooms, University of Pittsburgh, College of Education, 1976.

Hughes, James and Rice, Eric, Needs Assessment Procedure: Mainstreaming Handicapped, Volume II, A Manual for Vocational Education Administrators, Science Systems, Inc., Chapel Hill, North Carolina, May 1978.

Rice, J., "Final Evaluation Report: Eleven State Technical Assistance Project," Boston, Massachusetts, August 31, 1974.

Rumble, Richard R. "Mainstreaming the Handicapped in Vocational Education," Portland Public Schools, Portland, Oregon, January 1978.

Schwartz, Stuart E., "Mainstreaming Handicapped Students into Regular Classrooms," Florida University, College of Education, Gainesville, Florida, March 1978.

S A M P L E

Individual Vocational Education Plan

Date of Report: _____

Student's Name _____ Date of Birth: _____

Center: _____ Program _____ Session _____

Sending School _____ Prepared By: _____

Test Data

Tests Administered | Comments

Additional Comments:

Goals & Objectives:

Instructional Strategies/Methods

S A M P L E

MAINSTREAMED STUDENT

PROGRESS REPORT

Please return to:_____in Special Needs

by:_____.

Student:_____

Instructor:_____

Subject:_____ Date:_____

Current topic of study:

Progress is Satisfactory_____ Unsatisfactory_____

Estimate of grade at this time: _____

Problems are developing in:

Class Attendance	_____		
Work Quality	_____	Academic _____	Performance _____
Attitude	_____		
Behavior	_____		
Participation	_____		
Preparation	_____		
Tests	_____		
Effort	_____		

Additional Comments:

Would you like further contact with the Special Needs Teacher/Coordinator in regard to this student? Yes_____ No_____

SAMPLE

SPECIAL NEEDS DEPARTMENT

CONSULTATION REPORT

Mainstreamed Student_____Date_____

Instructor:_____

Subject:_____

Instructor's Comments:

Teacher/Coordinator's Comments:

Action Taken:

Other Comments:

RELATED ACADEMIC SKILLS

AUTO BODY

1. Measurement - Length
   - English to 1/16th of an inch
   - Metric
2. Percentages - Concept
   - Reducing Paints
3. Fractions - Concept
   - Sight recognition of sizes: nuts, bolts, wrenches, sockets
   - Matching tools to parts in terms of size
4. Reading/Spelling
   - Key Terms

ENGINE TECHNOLOGY

1. Measurement - Length
   - English - down to 64th of an inch
   - Metric
2. Micrometer Reading
   - Down to 10,000th of an inch
3. Fractions - Basic Computations - to 64th of an inch
4. Decimals - Reading
   - Rounding
   - Basic Computations
5. Reading/Spelling
   - Key Terms

MASONRY

1. Measurement - Length
   - English - to 16th of an inch
   - Area, Volume - basic geometric figures
2. Fractions - Basic computations
3. Reading - Comprehension/Study Skills - notetaking

AIR CONDITIONING

1. Reading - All Comprehension Skills
2. Measurement - a. Length
   b. English - to 16th of an inch
   c. Gauge Reading

RECREATIONAL VEHICLES

1. Measurement - a. Length
   - English - to 16th of an inch
   - Metric

   b. Instrument Reading
   - Metric Micrometer
   - Vernier Coliper

   c. Area, Volume, Capacity
   - English
   - Metric

2. Fractions - Basic Computations

3. Decimals - Basic Computations

4. Reading - Comprehension

WELDING

1. Fractions - Basic Computations - to 64ths of an inch
   - Conversion to Decimals (for drill sizes)

2. Decimals - Conversion to fractions (for drill sizes)

3. Measurement - Length
   - English - to 16ths of an inch

4. Reading/Spelling
   - Key Terms